



## THE 1980 MOSCOW OLYMPICS

### Olympics

Participating countries: **80**  
 Number of participants: **5,179**  
 Number of sports: **21**  
 Opening: **July 19, 1980**  
 Closing: **August 3, 1980**

**Central Lenin Stadium**  
 Opening: **July 1956**  
 Refurbishment: **1976/1980**  
 Capacity: **100,000**

(Russia)

DESPITE THE BOYCOTT, THE MOSCOW GAMES DID NOT DISAPPOINT EXPECTATIONS HIGHLIGHTING GREAT ATHLETES AND IMPRESSIVE SPORTS FACILITIES. FOR MONDO, THIS BEING ITS SECOND OLYMPICS, IT WAS AN OPPORTUNITY TO SHOW THE POTENTIAL OF ITS PRODUCTS IN SPORTS FACILITIES NOT DEDICATED TO ATHLETICS.

### POLITICS AND SPORT

The Moscow Olympics, apart from sports scores, are remembered for the role played by international politics. The decision by the United States and 60 other countries, not to participate in the Games, in response to the Soviet army's **invasion of Afghanistan** that began on Christmas Eve of 1979, brought the number of participating countries to 80, the lowest number since the 1956 edition. It should be noted that not all the allies of the United States joined the **boycott**, Italy, for example, although part of NATO, participated parading under the Olympic flag instead of the national one, a choice shared by the other fifteen countries of the so-called "Western bloc". Some athletes from nations adhering to the boycott, however, participated individually.

### STATE FUNDING

The role of politics was also evident in the Olympics organization, where state intervention was massive. The Games were an opportunity for the USSR to show off their organizational skills and commitment that the country had always shown in encouraging the practice of physical education and sport, as written in the constitution of the Soviet Union. The presence of the state was crucial, starting with the financing of the Games. The costs to prepare for the Olympics, in fact, were included in the budget for the **five-year state plan for economic development** for the 1976-1980 periods. The plan included not only the construction and renovation of sports facilities, but also the infrastructure to be built in Moscow such as housing, offices, hotels, transportation, new communication equipment, and others.

## THE SELECTION OF SPORTS FACILITIES

The objective of the Soviet government was to improve existing facilities and to create new ones, with the provision that these would benefit the population upon the conclusion of the Olympics. In addition to physical activity, new facilities would be used to host public events and entertainment. At the end of 1975 a competition was organized which was attended by 500 architects and engineers, the purpose of which was to obtain suggestions from the point of view of architecture and engineering, which would serve as the basis for Olympic projects. The suggested facilities would be both modern and inexpensive to build. The experience of past editions' organizers proved to be important. Observers of the 1980 Olympic Committee in Moscow, in fact, had participated in the preparation of the 1972 Games in Monaco and Montreal 1976. Overall, twenty-five structures were used for competitions, twelve of which were completely new and thirteen having been renovated. Forty-nine were selected to host the training of national teams.

## LENIN CENTRAL STADIUM

The **Lenin Central Stadium** (now known as the Luzniki Olympic Complex) was the center of the Moscow Games. Built in 1956 at the end of the first summer of Spartachiadi Games organized by the USSR, it has hosted over the years many national and international competitions of various sports. During the Olympics, the facility was renovated and modified in accordance to the recommendations and instructions of the International Olympic Committee. The complex included the **Grand Arena**, the Small Arena, a swimming pool and a sports hall. The Grand Arena, in particular, served as the stadium during the Games, which hosted the opening and closing ceremonies, the athletics competitions, the finals of the soccer tournament and the equestrian individual obstacle jumping event. The facility, now called Luzniki Stadium, during the Olympics had a capacity of 100,000 people. Its renewal included, among other things, the construction of the Olympic brazier at the top of the eastern staircase, the installation of two scoreboards in the stands North and South and the elevation of four 86 meter tall towers to illuminate the arena.

## MONDO ENTERS THE POOL

The Moscow Olympics were an opportunity for Mondo to make its official debut in the **Olympic Swimming Pool**. The Gallo d'Alba based Company, in fact, took care of the construction and the installation of flooring for the platforms used by divers in the Olympic pool. For the occasion, the adopted solution was **Sportflex Super X**, which is considered ideal for its characteristics, in particular for its high resistance and its ability to ensure good grip even when wet. The successful Moscovite experience finally opened the doors of Olympic swimming pools to Mondo: Sportflex Super X, in fact, was used in **Seoul 1988, Barcelona 1992, Atlanta 1996, Sydney 2000 and Athens 2004**. More recently, the **World Championships in Rome in 2009**, after an analysis carried out by **Giampaolo Gorge** (Mondo's Sports Division) and **Klaus Dibiasi** (winner of five Olympic medals) to assess its feasibility, it was decided to install Sportflex Super X on the diving platform: about 60 square meters of red color, so as to increase the contrast with the water. It should be noted the special attention to detail that this installation requires, considering that it is set on platforms that are 10 meters in height, in most cases when the pool is empty. Another "interesting" use of Mondo Sportflex Super X during Moscow 1980 took place inside the **velodrome**, where the special surface was set on the inside lane (the one where cyclists go up waiting to start the race) of the track made with the Siberian larches wood.





